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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-3220
December 2, 2004

Ref: Docket No. 03-133

The Honorable Michael Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW #8
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman Powell:

It has come to my attention that the Commission is considering a regulatory change that could negatively impact the prepaid calling cards that many U.S. troops use to stay in touch with their families. Over 95% of military personnel utilize these cards. I urge you and your colleagues to avoid taking any action that would have the effect of increasing the cost for our men and women in uniform to keep in touch with home.

As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I would respectfully ask you to review report language that was included in the FY05 Omnibus Appropriations Bill:

"The conferees are aware that members of the Armed Services and their families make extensive use of prepaid phone cards to stay in contact. The FCC is considering subjecting these cards to increased regulation. The conferees direct the FCC not to take any action that would directly or indirectly have the effect of raising rates charged to military personnel or their families for telephone calls placed using prepaid phone cards". (Conference Report, 209)

I have had the privilege of traveling to Iraq and Afghanistan to visit with forward-deployed units, and on several occasions I have presented the troops with calling cards. I have seen firsthand how much our soldiers appreciate the cards. I respectfully request that the Commission communicate their intent to raise rates with my office. The Commission should not take any action that would work to the detriment of those who depend on these cards. Victoria Sanville of my staff is available at (202) 225-5614 should you need additional information.

Sp. 4444y.

JOHN E. SWEENEY
Member of Congress

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